

District of Columbia

# Voluntary Foster Care Registry

## Information for the Community



Now there's a way for current or former foster youth and their immediate birth family members to find each other after being separated as a result of involvement in the District's foster care system. When both parties enroll in the Voluntary Foster Care Registry, the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) can let them know how to contact each other.

You are eligible to enroll in the Voluntary Foster Care Registry if you are:

- Over age 18 and (1) currently in District foster care or (2) previously the subject of a child abuse or neglect case in the District—and you want to find your birth parents or siblings.
- A birth parent who lost touch with your child or a birth sibling separated from your brothers or sisters in the District child welfare system and you now hope to reconnect.

### *I think I qualify, so how do I register?*

You need to fill out a registration form. Choose one of these ways to get the form.

- Go to [www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov) and download and print the document.
- Email a request for the registration form to [VFCR@dc.gov](mailto:VFCR@dc.gov).
- Call the Voluntary Foster Care Registry at (202) 442-6188 and ask to have a registration form mailed to you.



Complete and submit the registration form along with a photocopy of a government-issued photo ID, such as your driver's license. Note that your registration form isn't complete until you have it notarized. You can take care of this with a Notary you know—or ask the Voluntary Foster Care Registry Administrator about using one of the Notaries on staff at CFSA. Mail your completed form and ID photocopy to: DC Child and Family Services Agency, Voluntary Foster Care Registry Administration, 200 I Street SE, Washington, DC 20003. You may also hand-deliver your documents to that address between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday (except holidays when the government is closed).

### *When I enroll, will CFSA find my family members?*

No. The Voluntary Foster Care Registry doesn't search out family members. But if you and your family members both register, we will connect you. Here's an example of how it works. You spent time in foster care and lost contact with your birth mother. You register with the Voluntary Foster Care Registry. It just so happens that your birth mother also registered because she wants to find you. We confirm your relationship and put you in touch with each other.



### *I was adopted as an infant through a private adoption agency. I was never in the District's child welfare system. Can the Voluntary Foster Care Registry help me?*

Sorry, no. The Registry is only for people who are or were involved with the District's public child welfare system. If you were adopted through a private

adoption agency and were not in foster care before your adoption, you must get a court order through the Family Court of the District of Columbia Superior Court to find out the identity of your birth parent(s).

***My involvement with the child welfare system was very short. Do I still qualify to enroll?***

Yes. Any person who was the subject of a child abuse or neglect case may register. It doesn't matter how long your case was open or when it closed.

***If I register, can I change my mind later?***

Yes. You can remove your name from the Voluntary Foster Care Registry at any time. To withdraw, simply submit an updated registration form saying you want to drop out of the Registry, get it notarized, and turn it in to CFSA.

***What if I only want to connect with certain family members?***

When you register, you can specify the family members you want to see, if they also sign up for the Registry. For example, you can specify that you want to reconnect with your mother and brother but not your father or sister. CFSA will not share your information with any of your family members who register unless you have given us permission to do so.

***I move around a lot. How will the Voluntary Foster Care Registry know how to find me in the event of a match with my family?***

Please keep us informed about how to reach you. Each time you change any of your contact information, especially your telephone number or address, send CFSA an updated and notarized registration form.



***I'm nervous about meeting a long-lost family member. Can CFSA help?***

It's not uncommon to have mixed feelings. In the event that the Registry produces a match between you and an immediate family member, CFSA can provide a social worker or counselor to help facilitate your reunion.

***If I enroll in the Voluntary Foster Care Registry, will you share my personal information with other agencies?***

Not until there's a match with someone you're hoping to locate. In the event of an apparent match in the Voluntary Foster Care Registry, CFSA must verify the familial relationship. To do that, we'll contact one or more reliable, independent third parties. Some examples are:

- The agency that placed the child for adoption.
- The Vital Records Division of the DC Department of Health.
- The Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.
- Local departments of social services.

CFSA will share only enough information to confirm your relationship to an immediate family member who has also enrolled in the Voluntary Foster Care Registry.

***How can I get more information about the Voluntary Foster Care Registry?***

Call (202) 442-6188, go to [www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov), or send an email inquiry to [VFCR@dc.gov](mailto:VFCR@dc.gov). ■



DC Child and Family Services Agency  
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